

Headless Rite from Σκευη Ευφημεω—drafted in 2022/2023

Context:

In late September of 2022 our dear Soror Hvezda gave me printed copies of all of the Headless rites being discussed at Magical Bastards, which I promptly misplaced because it was a sweet gesture and/but I definitely wasn't a magician and probably wasn't cool enough to hang out with the folks regularly congregating for book club at the Long Haul.



In October of 2022 I ended up finding those photocopies—along with, if memory serves, a photocopy of Hvezda's missal for Gnostic Mass—just in time to have them serve as my in-flight reading while going to see my moderately transphobic evangelical relatives. While there, my mother and grandmother pointed out a long-dead, lightning-struck, theoretically-cursed tree they'd referred to as The Headless One for the past several decades. "*That's probably a coincidence,*" I thought, because I definitely wasn't a magician.

In November of 2022, I decided I would attempt to initiate myself into Nahemoth¹ but the ritual Hvezda and I had planned was postponed due to my coming down with the worst sinus infection I'd had during The Plague Years. Lying in bed, partially stoned on cold medication, I decided I would draft my own version of the Headless Rite because I (somehow, mistakenly) believed that was a requirement for all magical initiations. Drafting this took a little under a weekend, and was unexpectedly cathartic because I realized it was the first time I'd written anything *for pleasure* and *purely for myself* in decades. I quickly found myself applying the same editing process I'd done when I was competing in national slam poetry competitions—if speaking the line out loud doesn't make your hair stand on end, **that line isn't done yet**. In my experience as both a pastor and a performer, speaking your Truth (the capital letter is an obligation here) should do that to you, regardless of your volume.²

As readers will see in the side-by-side comparison, this Headless Rite is primarily an adaptation of Frater Antichristos's Satanized version, half out of appreciation

¹ Technically my second initiation into this klipa, but the first one done deliberately.

² And it's always nice when that Truth lands with your audience by default, but this was not written to please a crowd.

that his unpacks the meaning of each barbarous name, and half out of a desire to borrow insights from a seminary colleague. My own version contains no barbarous names, both because I tend towards not invoking things in languages I have not studied and because vibrating them made me self-conscious enough that it took me out of ritual headspace.³ I feel that I have retained the spirit(s) of Antichristos's version, if not the identical punch.

In the original version of this text, I aimed to use each element to bring a specific sense into greater attunement with the Rite.⁴ These sections were slightly rewritten for the occasion of my debaptism in May 2023, altering the last stanza of each section in order to reflect the repeated "*Hear Me, and Make all Spirits subject unto me...*" of older versions of Headless.⁵

The following Headless Rite is a remix of a remix of a remix, but so is poetry, and so is ritual, and so is history. All of this has happened before and will happen again. The original iteration gets translated, or charred a bit at the bottom, gaining all sorts of interesting transcription errors and artifacts and glitches, and over time it becomes at once unrecognizable from its previous self, fundamentally its own self, and manifestly a patchwork of all of the selves that came before. I am descending into divine bullshit and slamming my bare ass down on a fax machine, and there I find Myself Made Perfect, "*neither human nor god, not me but more me than I am.*"⁶

I am wandering off the map to find myself, and here, as in there, I find monsters.

Boo.

³ I do not deny them their poetry and their power now, but in that moment they were not my poetry and power, and *mine* was what was needed given how dormant they had been.

⁴ Labeled **OPTION A** in the text below. Given that **OPTION A** involves a repetition of a personal magical name in order to complete a specific rhyme, those using this option would be required to partially rewrite the text.

⁵ This is labeled **OPTION B** and equal parts inspiration and blame on Frater Gnostrigrangel, I think.

⁶ Some other motherfucker with a penchant for lighting-struck trees.

(Frater Antichristos)

(Σκευη Ευφημεω)

OATH (East): *Inverted pentagram*

Thee I invoke, the Bornless one

Thee, that didst create the Earth and
the Heavens

**Thee, that didst create the Night and
the Day**

**Thee, that didst create the Darkness
and the Light**

Thou art Myself Made Perfect

Whom no man hath seen at any time

Thou art the truth in matter

Thou are the truth in motion

Thou hast distinguished between the
just and the unjust

Thou didst make the female-and-male

**Thou didst produce the Seed and the
Fruit**

Thou didst form us to love one
another and to hate one another

**I am Antichristos Akelphalos, Thy
prophet**, unto whom Thou didst
commit **Thy Mysteries**, the secrets of
the Nephilim

Thou didst produce the moist and the
dry, and that which nourisheth all Life

**Hear Thou me, for I am the Angel of
Thy True Name**, handed down to the
Prophets of Pandemonium

*Bornless one, be with me now:
I am Thy prophet, head unbowed—*

*Thou art Myself Made Perfect
Whom no living soul has ever seen
Thou art the dusk, dark, dawn, and day⁷
Female and male and in-between⁸*

*Thou art the truth in matter
Thou art the seed, leaf, fruit, and rot⁹
Thou art the truth in motion—
Sharpen my Will, my Way, my thought*

*Hear me now, O spirits gathered—
I am Eufemeo Tem
I am an Angel of Thy True Name
Here I am, now let's begin*

*Hear me now, O spirits gathered—
I am Eufemeo Tem
Serving Life and all its Mystery
Hineni, now let's begin!*

⁷ Doubles as a Resh reference and a reference to a Seanan McGuire story collection, and I find alliteration delightful.

⁸ This line isn't *not* for our dear Sibling Helios.

⁹ As of this write-up I am about two months from finishing my initial death doula training, and I have some quibbles with the line in the Gnostic Mass that when we invoke "by seed, and root, and stem, and bud, and leaf, and flower, and fruit," we omit the glorious, necessary, awful stage of decay/putrefaction. Returning to earth is not failure but fulfillment—a hill I am willing to die on, trusting that she will swallow me back with tenderness.

<p>AIR (East): Upward triangle with strikethrough</p> <p>Hear Me:</p> <p>O breathing flowing sun, O Sun IAO! O lion serpent sun! The beast that whirlst forth, a thunderbolt, begetter of life! Thou that flowest, thou that goest! Thou Satan-Sun-Hadit that goest without will! Thou air, breath, spirit! Thou without bound or bond! Thou essence, air swift-streaming, elasticity! Thou wanderer, brother of all! Thou wanderer, lover of all! Thou shining force of breath! Thou lion serpent sun! Inviolable wisdom, whose word is truth, O Sun IAO, O beast that whirlst forth, A thunderbolt, begetter of life</p> <p>Hear Me, and make all Spirits subject unto Me: so that every Spirit of the Firmament and of the Ether: upon the Earth and under the Earth: on dry Land and in the Water: of Whirling Air, and of rushing Fire: and every Spell and Scourge of God may be obedient unto Me.</p>	<p>O breathing, flowing sun! O beast who whirlst forth! Thou art the lightning, Thou art thunder Thou the storm who gives us birth!</p> <p>Thou hast wandered as our brother Thou hast wandered as our love Thou art wisdom, breath, and spirit Thou art Satan-Sun above!</p> <p>Thou art Lion, Thou art Serpent Shedding truth where'er You go Thou art boundless, bondless essence Thou the cycle IAO!¹⁰</p> <p>(OPTION A) Hear me now, O spirits gathered— I am Eufemeo Tem Touch my hands that I might touch you Hineni, now let's begin!</p> <p>(OPTION B) Hear Me now, O Spirits gathered Either stay or turn and flee But remain here in this temple And you're subject unto Me!¹¹</p>
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¹⁰ Writing this having not attended Gnostic Mass meant Hvezda had to explain that the syllables here were flexible enough to serve at the pleasure of the previous lines, so she gets partial credit for this verse if she wants it.

¹¹ Your author feels that it's important to give spirits the opportunity to opt out of being press-ganged into magical workings.

<p>FIRE (South): <i>Upward triangle</i></p> <p>I invoke Thee, the terrible and invisible God, who dwellest in the Void Place of the Spirit</p> <p>Thou Spiritual Sun! Satan, thou eye, thou lust! Cry aloud! Cry aloud! Whirl the Wheel, O my Father, O Satan, O Sun! Thou, Lightbringer! Thou, Morningstar! Silence! Give me thy secret! Give me suck, thou phallus, thou sun! Satan, thou eye, thou lust! Satan, thou eye, thou lust! Thou self-made, self-willed, self-fulfilled Without a maker or a master!</p> <p><i>Hear Me, and make all Spirits subject unto Me: so that every Spirit of the Firmament and of the Ether: upon the Earth and under the Earth: on dry Land and in the Water: of Whirling Air, and of rushing Fire: and every Spell and Scourge of God may be obedient unto Me.</i></p>	<p><i>Hail O Star of the Morning First to fall with head unbowed Thou art self-made, self-fulfilling, Unto Thee I cry aloud</i></p> <p><i>Whirl the wheel, Unholy Father Spin a new vessel up from dust Give me Thy secret and Thy silence Give me desire, give me lust</i></p> <p><i>Thou who brought the light down with Thee Sun who stole eternal flame Without maker, without master, Give me suck and call my name¹²</i></p> <p>(OPTION A) <i>Hear me now, O spirits gathered— I am Eufemeo Tem Open my eyes that I might see you Hineni, now let's begin!</i></p> <p>(OPTION B) <i>Hear Me now, O Spirits gathered Either stay or turn and flee, Whirling Air and Rushing Fire Are now subject unto Me!</i></p>
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¹² Your author is a kinky asexual, so this section made for a fun moment of “am I comfortable with the thought of sucking off the devil in exchange for sinister magic?” and immediately going “it feels like a natural telos for my seminary education, actually.”

<p>WATER (West): <i>Downward triangle</i></p> <p>I invoke thee, Leviathan, Tanin'Iver, sightless serpent, Hear Me!</p> <p>Thou the wheel, the womb, the chasm Thou the sea, and thou the serpent Babalon, thou woman of whoredom Thou, the gates, Our Lady of the Understanding of the Ways! Hail thou, unstirred! Hail thou, unsired!</p> <p>Hail sister-bride of Samael, all and none, two and one, by the power of eleven! Thou harlot, twin-sexed! Thou sacred seed! Thou thunder, perfect mind! Abode of the light, O Lady of the Western Gates, mighty thou art!</p> <p><i>Hear Me, and make all Spirits subject</i> <i>unto Me: so that every Spirit of the</i> <i>Firmament and of the Ether: upon the</i> <i>Earth and under the Earth: on dry Land</i> <i>and in the Water: of Whirling Air, and of</i> <i>rushing Fire: and every Spell and Scourge</i> <i>of God may be obedient unto Me.</i></p>	<p><i>Thou art wheel, and womb, and chasm</i> <i>Thou the serpent and the sea</i> <i>Thou the gates of understanding</i> <i>Open now; flood into me</i></p> <p><i>Thou unstirred and Thou unsired</i> <i>Sacred seed and perfect mind</i> <i>Two and one and all and nothing</i> <i>Babalon, O Whore Divine!</i></p> <p><i>Thou art sightless in dark water</i> <i>Hear me now, Leviathan</i> <i>Drown me in my own potential</i> <i>Shed this skin, begin again!¹³</i></p> <p>(OPTION A) <i>Hear me now, O spirits gathered—</i> <i>I am Eufemeo Tem</i> <i>Touch my mouth that I might taste you</i> <i>Hineni, now let's begin!¹⁴</i></p> <p>(OPTION B) <i>Hear Me now, O Spirits gathered</i> <i>Either stay or turn and flee,</i> <i>Whether on dry land or water</i> <i>You are subject unto Me!</i></p>
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¹³ This was one of the last stanzas to be finalized, as it sprung into the author's head fully formed while they were about a quarter-mile off shore swimming in the San Francisco Bay. It was committed to waterlogged paper an hour later with shaking hands and frigid salt water still rolling off of them.

¹⁴ Your author was met with instant salty hubris the only time they've tried to perform this version while treading water.

<p>EARTH (North): Downward triangle with strikethrough</p> <p>O Mother, O Truth! O Mass and Matter! Hail, Thou that Art! Thou hollow one! Thou Goddess of Beauty and Love, whom Satan, beholding, desireth! Male-female, he desires thee. Male-female, thou desireth him!</p> <p>Hear Me, and make all Spirits subject unto Me: so that every Spirit of the Firmament and of the Ether: upon the Earth and under the Earth: on dry Land and in the Water: of Whirling Air, and of rushing Fire: and every Spell and Scourge of God may be obedient unto Me.</p>	<p>Thou art Beauty rendered weapon Satan cannot help but kneel¹⁵ Thou art Lust and Love Requited Thou art Dark Earth that can heal¹⁶</p> <p>Thou art Mass and Thou art Matter¹⁷ Thou Desire's beating heart Transcend ego, form, and gender Hail to Thee, O Thou that Art!</p> <p>Give me love of hollow places Where the truth rings loud and clear Make me unafraid of silence And within it what I hear¹⁸</p> <p>(OPTION A) Hear me now, O spirits gathered— I am Eufemeo Tem Put your scent out; I will track it¹⁹ Hineni, now let's begin!</p> <p>(OPTION B) Hear Me now, O Spirits gathered Either stay or turn and flee Those upon the Earth and und'r it Are now subject unto Me</p>
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¹⁵ More accurately "Lucifer is glad to kneel," if we're going off the model of Satan being the union of Eisheth Zenunim and Lucifer.

¹⁶ I felt Na'amah needed more explicit shoutouts given the original occasion for this draft.

¹⁷ Occasionally "Thou art Mass and Thou art Mother," or "Thou art Mother, Thou art Matter."

¹⁸ In my experience interesting things occasionally happen if I pause after this verse. Sometimes what you hear in the silence is a stunning revelation you carry with you for months, sometimes it's just a car alarm going off nearby.

¹⁹ Surprisingly difficult to convey the sentiment "I WOULD LIKE TO BE ABLE TO SMELL THE ENTITIES FOR THE SAKE OF SENSUAL PARITY" in a way that doesn't sound like a serial killer.

<p>SPIRIT BELOW (East/Up): <i>The Earth</i> (circle, cross)</p> <p>Hear me, forces of Hell! Male-female spirit! Male-female sire! Ye that are Gods, going forth, uttering AUMGN Identical point!</p> <p>Lilith, Samael, Baphomet! O Beast with two backs, hail! This is the Lord of the Gods This is the Lord of the Universe This is He Whom the Winds Fear This is He, Who having made Voice by His Commandment, is Lord of All Things</p> <p><i>Hear Me, and make all Spirits subject unto Me: so that every Spirit of the Firmament and of the Ether: upon the Earth and under the Earth: on dry Land and in the Water: of Whirling Air, and of rushing Fire: and every Spell and Scourge of God may be obedient unto Me.</i></p>	<p><i>I call the Lord of Gods Who Caused the Winds to Fear O One Whose Voice is a Commandment Cause Thy Kindred to appear:</i></p> <p><i>Hail to Thee, O Wild Lilith, Hear me now, forces of Hell I will greet Thee at the crossroad Be my teacher, Samael!²⁰</i></p> <p><i>As above be so below O balance me, dear Baphomet Hail to all my guides and guardians Who I've not encountered yet!²¹</i></p> <p>(OPTION A) <i>Hear me now, O spirits gathered— I am Eufemeo Tem Touch my ears that I might listen Hineni, now let's begin!</i></p> <p>(OPTION A) <i>Hear Me now, O Spirits gathered Either stay or turn and flee But those of Firmament and Ether Are now subject unto Me</i></p>
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²⁰ About half the time I do this I end up knocking on the floor twice for each name. I don't want to compel anyone to come to me against their will, but I want them to know they are welcome to attend.

²¹ Half needing a rhyme for *Baphomet*, half an acknowledgement that magical practice is a gradual unfurling. I'm in love with my future and can't wait to meet them.

<p>SPIRIT ABOVE (East/Down): <i>The Sun (circle, dot)</i></p> <p>Hear me, Powers of Air and Sons of Morning! Indwelling sun of my soul Thou fire, Thou Morningstar! Indwelling God of my soul O fire, O Morningstar! Sun lion serpent, hail! Hail thou great wild beast! Breath of my soul, breath of my angel! Lust of my soul, lust of my angel! Thou knowing good and evil! Ho for the cup of Babalon! Pour thyself into my soul! The eye! Satan, my love, O lust of the goat! Mine angel, mine initiator, thou one with me, O Morningstar! My Lord, my life, my secret self! Come forth, hidden light! Devour me! Thou dost devour me! There is no I, only thou, there is no I, only thou there is no I, only thou Arise in me, I will thee, I behold thee Leap up, O Earth O Bornless One! Behold! The splashing seeds of immortality!</p> <p><i>Hear Me, and make all Spirits subject unto Me: so that every Spirit of the Firmament and of the Ether: upon the Earth and under the Earth: on dry Land and in the Water: of Whirling Air, and of rushing Fire: and every Spell and Scourge of God may be obedient unto Me.</i></p>	<p>(OPTION A) <i>See me now, O Sons of Morning Dawn is breaking in my heart Call the light from deep within me Shape my science into art</i></p> <p><i>Devour me as I behold Thee Rise in me, I'm ready now— Angel and Initiator: There is no I, only Thou—</i></p> <p><i>Thou who knowest good and evil Pour thyself into this soul Eufemeo isn't here now But they are home...and they are whole</i></p> <p>(OPTION B)²² <i>See me now, Indwelling Sunlight Dawn is breaking in my heart Call a spark up from within me Shape my science into art</i></p> <p><i>Devour me as I behold Thee Rise in me, I'm ready now— Angel and Initiator: There is no I, only Thou—</i></p> <p><i>Thou who knowest good and evil Pour thyself into this soul Knit us back together briefly We are home and we are whole²³</i></p> <p><i>Hear Me now, O Spirits gathered Either stay or turn and flee But every Spell and Scourge of God Is now obedient to Me</i></p>
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²² This section was originally the hardest to write because so much of the language is used elsewhere in the ritual. There was a substantial rewrite between November and May, purely from doing the Rite regularly and developing more of a working relationship with Something Both More Than Me And Not Me.

²³ These two lines courtesy of the aforementioned More Than Me And Not Me.

<p>THE ATTAINMENT (East): <i>Personal sigil</i></p> <p>I am He! The Bornless Spirit, having sight in the feet Strong, and the immortal Fire!</p> <p>I am He, the Truth! I am he, who hate that evil should be wrought in the world! I am He that lightningeth and thundereth! I am He, from whom is the Shower of Life! I am He whose mouth flameth! I am He, the Begetter and Manifester! I am He, the Lightbringer!</p> <p>I am He, the Lord of this world. "The Heart Girt With a Serpent" is my name!</p> <p><i>Come Thou forth, and follow Me:</i> and make all Spirits subject unto Me so that every Spirit of the Firmament, and of the Ether: upon the Earth and under the Earth: on dry land, or in the Water: of whirling Air or of rushing Fire: and every Spell and Scourge of God, may be obedient unto me!</p> <p>CLOSING: <i>Inverted cross</i> IAO, SABAO, SHEMHAMFORASH! Such are the words!</p>	<p><i>Hear me now, O human witness— I am He whose breath is flame "Heart Encircled With a Serpent" Should you need to speak my name</i></p> <p><i>I am He, Headless and Bornless Sight in feet I am not blind I am strong, immortal Fire I'm the thunder in their mind</i></p> <p><i>They are a single shoreline second They are a brief perfection I am the wave that shapes each moment I am their resurrection</i></p> <p><i>And I have always been here And I will never, ever leave That is a promise and a threat There is much more yet to perceive</i>²⁴</p> <p>(OPTION A) <i>Hear me now, O human witness— When you step down into Night You are one Star out of many And the sum of all their light</i></p> <p><i>Coax your flame up from the ashes Cut your diamond Self from stone Answer to the god within you—</i></p>
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²⁴ Sometimes you have writer's block and yell to an empty room that you're tired and you're going to bed and if they want this ritual written on time they're going to have to step up, and then you wake from a deep sleep and frantically write eight lines down on scratch paper and only after you finish do you realize that you are not left-handed, but who you are in this moment is atypically blurry.

I understand this life as one, individual, and eternal. I am a wave that rolls back to the ocean. And I have been made to understand the counterpart I am invoking as both a force that remembers the configuration of all of these water molecules and one with sufficient will to reunite them when they scatter. They were with me before I was born. They'll be present at my death. (I have been made to understand that this is, in fact, the only time I'm going to be able to see their face.) Life is being on the opposite side of a veil from them; the practice of magic allows us to more easily bother the other at home.

Nema!

You need never walk alone.

(OPTION B)

*Hear Me now, O spirits gathered
Come thou forth out of the night,
I am one Star out of many
But the sum of all their light*

*Hear me now, O all assembled
Stardust, ash, and breath, and bone
Listen for the god within you
You need never walk alone*

Such are the words in closing:

IO IAO. IAO SABAO.
O SHEMHAMFORASH.
NEMA, TO THE END.
NEMA, TO THE BEGINNING.
AND NEMA ONCE AGAIN.
AND NEMA ONCE AGAIN.
NEMA. NEMA. NEMA.